RUMANIA ED I

342 Windows are generally double even in the simpler houses, one opening to the inside, the other to the outside. They are always barred and set in a wooden frame (Jänecke, 1918: 27-28).

342 531 The Rumanian house is noteworthy for its exterior decorations. Special attention and much imagination is given to the woodwork. Much art is evident in the pillars supporting the roof over the veranda (fig. 57d), lintels supporting the eaves, the railings of the veranda and the window and door frames. The corners of houses may have designs in low relief. Painted designs may be placed on the wall in great abundance (figs. 57a, 57b). Because of the lesser opportunity of embellishment through woodwork and because whitewashed walls lend themselves well to painting, painting of the exterior is characteristic of the plains. The Rumanian does not shy away from bright colors. Ultramarine is most popular, for it is said to scare away evil spirits. Combinations of red, blue and yellow are common, and dark green shades are also favored (Jänecke, 1918: 23).

342 [184] [341] The basic difference between the house of the lowlands and those of the mountain region is that the latter are of two-story construction (fig. 64a). Building materials in the mountains are stone and wood rather than wicker and mud. When houses are built on an incline a high stone foundation forms the ground floor (pivnita). This can be used for stables, storage rooms and also as a wine cellar. This form persists even when the terrain is flat. The higher house is appreciated for its better view, greater security and suitability for defense.

While the floor plan often consists of a row of rooms similar to that of the lowlands, a number of changes have taken place. The anteroom with its large hearth is generally left out (fig. 64b). This is due to the fact that the bricks that line the hearth are not available, and the wooden walls are more inflammable than the predominantly mud ones of the plains. Where the hearth is present [354] it is put into a special annex. Instead of the hearth an oven-stove (a combination stove and oven) is used, which permits the main room to be used as living room and sleeping room as well as a kitchen.

The two-room house predominates; due to the absence of the connecting anteroom, each room has a door to the veranda (čerdak) (fig. 66). Sometimes the veranda at the top of the stairway is expanded into a hall-like structure (foişor) (fig. 64a) covered by a hipped roof at right angles to the main roof. In summer most activities take place there.

The foundation is made of rocks or of large pebbles from the river. Walls are made of horizontal logs or boards which cross at the corners, each fitting into a notch in the other. A mud or lime plaster is never omitted, and to facilitate this plastering thin laths are nailed diagonally across the beams.